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—Will Herberg

THE

Commonweal

People and Food

by Colin Clark

Italian Movies

by Gunnar D. Kumlien

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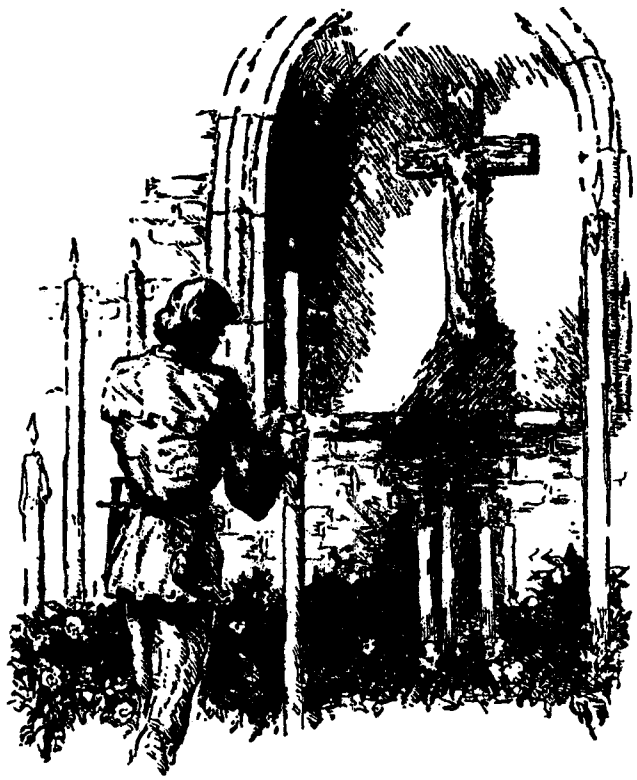

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THE Commonweal

week by week

THE DULLES TRIP

SECRETARY of State Dulles took off last week on a flight into the East, where the acrid day-heat gives a sense of noon, of something ending and something impending.

He will find little in the Near and Middle East to please him. The Secretary told Congress before he left that "Western, and even American, prestige in this area has been deteriorating steadily."

Turkey, a nation of heavy-handed stability, is undergoing a recession. It fears that the new program recommended by the MSA-sponsored commission of businessmen who recently visited that country will only accentuate that recession. The commission did call for arms supplies, but recommended deep cuts in economic aid. The Turks want arms, but more than that, help in building their young economy so that it can make its own heavy equipment and arms.

South of Turkey are Iran and Iraq. The former has so knotted itself into international and domestic trouble that Dulles has decided not to complicate matters with a visit.

In Iraq and the Arab countries, a Moslem crescent between West and East, Dulles will see the dead-end of feudalism, and a new search for national advancement. He will see a stirring of interest in the successes of Naguib of Egypt. Naguib, a strong man supposedly fronting for an even stronger man, Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser, is in a bitter stalemate with Britain over how fast and how irrevocably Britain is going to leave the Suez.

And between the Arabs and Israel, Dulles will find eight hundred seventy-four thousand Arab refugees living on United Nations relief, and one hundred twenty thousand more living in their own homes but deprived of the means of making a living. He will see in their disregarded desires the crux of Arab-Israeli disagreement, and a challenge to the moral position of the West.

He will go on to Asia and see newly-freed nations trying to teach the illiterate and the isolated to understand democracy. He will see governments hamstrung by private interests, economic difficulties, and inexperience. But here, as in Egypt, he will see people who have taken the reins of destiny, and one may suspect that he will be moved, and see as Americans often do not see, that these people deserve our help and our concern for what they are and what they try to do rather than for their strategic position in the Cold War.

In India, Mr. Dulles will see neutralism growing, and increasing distrust of American policy. It is conceivable that before he returns the Korean War will have ended, and a new stage of our relations with China will have begun. The costly simplicity of war will be gone, and we will face anew the problems of Formosa and the recognition of China.

Only in French Indochina do things show precarious signs of improvement. The Laos invasion has apparently forced the French out of the trough of lethargy. A new commander has been appointed. Currency changes will take the profit of war away from certain Frenchmen (and it seems nightmarish that in this decade there are Frenchmen who might prolong the war for profit), and there are portents of greater local independence.

IF Secretary Dulles looks at the surface, he may return home depressed indeed at the balance of trouble and disagreement which extends from Istanbul to Panmunjom.

But if he puts aside the problems of his thankless responsibilities, he may see deeper reasons for hope. It is better that there be chaotic attempts at improvement, stubborn struggles against ignorance and selfishness, than that the new world in the East had never been born. And the world which these peoples want is the same world we want; we have that in common with them, the Soviets do not.

One may hope that Mr. Dulles will be able to make our common interest known to these countries, and encourage and enhance the economic and technical aid which we and the United Nations are giving them.

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Perhaps, too, he will encourage them to form among themselves in Asia, and with NATO in the Mediterranean, the regional groupings which will give them security against Communism.

Mr. Dulles' problem is to understand what is happening in these countries, and to deal with each not in terms of what we Americans might best like, but in terms of attainable security and stability. And to sense those things, books and reports are insufficient. What is necessary is to feel sand, see refugees, sweat in the heat of India, taste the grain of Asia, hear the rhythm, the atonal melody of the East. That is what Mr. Dulles is doing, and we hope that he will have a moving and memorable journey.

CHAMPION OF THE COMMON MAN

MUCH of the skepticism about the overworked concept of the common man in our day stems from a healthy aversion to sheer rhetoric. There is often so little to substantiate such hazy references. And it takes a lot of convincing to put over a mystique of the inherent virtues of a society of men conditioned by the rootlessness, insecurity, anonymity and sameness which many observers believe to be among the results of mass production.

In contrast is the faith in the common man (and in democracy) of the late Father James J. Tompkins of Nova Scotia, dean of the world-famed Antigonish movement. His was a faith in the potentialities of the average man and woman—even the uneducated. His was a faith based on a wealth of personal experience, a faith demonstrated by community achievements that verged on the spectacular and brought the world to his door.

Father Tompkins' belief in democracy, as opposed to rule by the few, went all the way. It reflected an unshakable conviction that good sense is so prevalent in the world that the most intelligent dictator is capable of more mistakes than any sizable group of his subjects. And he maintained this conviction when authoritarians of the Right and the Left were demonstrating how possible it now is to exercise complete control of all public channels of information.

This faith in widespread native intelligence and good sense had one important qualification with Father Tompkins. Ability to know, to judge and to do was always there potentially. But somebody had to thrust the right tools into the hands of the individual citizen if he and his fellows were to accomplish the great things of which they were capable. Enabling people to do things for themselves was the key to Father Tompkins' leading educational objective.

There were many practical ways of bringing this about. He started with the urgent material needs of local fishermen, farmers, miners and steelworkers. Where others saw credit unions, cooperative stores, producer and marketing cooperatives, etc., as ends in themselves—or as means of economic betterment—he conceived of these group activities in terms of adult education, as means of opening up horizons on the world of ideas and on family and community life.

Education was Father Tompkins' first love, from his early days at Saint Francis Xavier College at Antigonish. Summer after summer he devoted to gleaning first-hand knowledge of the leading universities of Europe and the Americas. His love for education inspired compassion for the wretched parishioners among whom he was thrust after two decades devoted to higher education itself.

His desire to bring knowledge and wisdom, and a new zest for life, to the economic serfs of his region also led to his vision of people's libraries in every town and hamlet. It led to the development of the St. F. X. University Extension Department, which uses all means of communication to reach people of every station. His was the role of the prophet and agitator, ever pressing for new steps in social pioneering. He was small of frame, great in his ambition for the common good, colorful in personality.

Few men have lived to see so many of their hopes well under way. Yet his aspirations went far beyond the well-being of his own beloved people. He thought of the Antigonish movement as a pilot experiment for social action in many lands, particularly where poverty and ignorance are the general lot. And St. F. X. has attracted students from many

NEXT WEEK

DONALD ATTWATER discusses the impending coronation of Queen Elizabeth.

"It is curious (but not unique) that the coronation of Christian monarchs seems undoubtedly to have had its origin, not in Old Testament precedents, but in ancient practices of the pagan Roman Empire. But as the rites developed under Christian auspices—at the imperial court at Constantinople, in Spain, England and France, and for the Holy Roman Emperors of the West—they became a highly complex service of blessing in which the anointing of the monarch with oil and chrism by a bishop was of more fundamental significance than the actual crowning itself."

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nations. It is consoling to realize that under the inspiration of this great educator a number of capable leaders have come to the fore in Nova Scotia. The great work which Father Tompkins had so much to do with starting continues to grow. May he rest in peace.

IDEOLOGY IN NEW YORK

LAST December, the directors of the Welfare and Health Council in New York City, after approving the qualifications and policies of the local Planned Parenthood group, rejected its application for membership. Their rejection followed a statement by the Council's Catholic member agencies (53 out of 391) that they would withdraw were the Planned Parenthood group admitted.

An immediate, and bitter, controversy resulted. Many prominent non-Catholics (including some Protestant and Jewish religious leaders) accused the Catholic groups of acting in an arbitrary, anti-democratic fashion, of attempting to impose their own minority will on the Council through "pressure tactics," of insisting on having their own way—or else. A full-dress ideological crusade, with "enlightened liberals" upholding democratic values against the machinations of "reactionary Catholics," was thus declared.

On May 7 the issue was decided. By a vote of 317 to 259 a board of directors pledged to admit the Planned Parenthood group was elected to the Council.

A spokesman for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America has hailed this as a great victory for democracy: "It is very moving and heartening," she said, "to think that the citizens of New York still believe that the democratic principle of civil liberties and personal freedom are more fundamental than any issue." The Catholic agencies are now expected to withdraw from active participation in the Council's work. The crusade has thus run its course.

The tragedy, of course, is that this affair was made into a crusade in the first place. Once it was, no compromise solution remained possible. What is in reality a most complex and subtle issue became a battleground for slogans. What should have been a matter for study and solution through an exercise of prudential judgment became a struggle where unconditional surrenders were demanded.

The original Catholic position was based on the agencies' (and all Catholics') conviction that the work of the Planned Parenthood Federation is objectively immoral. Because of this the Catholic agencies decided that they could not in conscience continue to cooperate in the Council's work if it should admit the birth control groups. There might be some question even among Catholics regarding the prudence of this decision, but to claim (as was widely claimed) that the decision was in itself an instance of Catholic "reaction," "pressure-tactics," and coercion is manifestly silly, if not malicious.

The truth is that, apart from any question of the prudence of the Catholic agencies' decision, it was, in fact, a thoroughly democratic one. And, again apart from the question of its prudence, it was one which should have been respected by the non-Catholic community as a decision based on an honest and deeply-held moral conviction.

The membership of the Council had an obvious right, under democratic procedure, to elect to admit the Planned Parenthood group. This they have done, and no one, including the Catholic agencies, should dispute it. But the Catholic agencies had a similar right to oppose the admission of a group whose work they believed to be immoral. To have heard this right derided as an example of Catholic "pressure" gives one a new, and sad, insight into how flabby a certain type of "liberal" thinking can indeed be.

AMENDING THE AMENDMENTS

LABOR unions have been fighting Taft-Hartley for so long that the process has become almost automatic. But when General Eisenhower came out for drastic revisions in the law, union officials thought the end of the long road was in sight. Now they are not so sure.

In the Congressional hearings on the controversial legislation, industry spokesmen have also been pressing hard for revision—but not in the direction the union leaders have in mind. The industrialists want a tougher law, not a softer one, and so far the innings have been all theirs.

At the moment the biggest threat to the unions comes from the strong drive to hand over much of the Federal government's power in this sphere to the individual states. "States' rights" makes a good rallying cry for those behind this move, but if such efforts are successful the unions will be hard hit. However lofty the discussion may get, the facts are that many state legislatures are highly susceptible to anti-union pressures from big industrialists who are able to exert their influence much more directly at the local than the national level.

As a result, labor leaders are currently fighting hard against changes in Taft-Hartley which would give the states a much stronger voice in industrial relations. The Republican victory last fall persuad-

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ed labor leaders to settle for amendment rather than outright repeal of the hated Taft-Hartley legislation. The way things are going right now, it is quite possible that they may eventually look back nostalgically on the good old days of T-H, before amendment.

WECHSLER AND McCARTHY

JAMES Wechsler is the editor of the New York *Post*, a newspaper which, in his own words, is "as bitterly opposed to Joe Stalin as it is to Joe McCarthy and believes that a free society can combat both." Wechsler was ostensibly called before Senator McCarthy's Senate Investigation subcommittee last month because between 1934 and '37, as a college student, he was a member of the Young Communist League (a fact he has never kept secret and recently a book written by him was found in a USIS library abroad.

Since he turned against Communism more than fifteen years ago, Wechsler's public life as a newspaperman, editor and publicist has been emphatically devoted to opposing Communist attempts to take over the liberal movement in the United States. That means that Mr. Wechsler, who is still a young man (he was born in 1915), has spent five-sixths of his time in public life consciously, conscientiously and consistently doing battle with the Communist Party. At the McCarthy hearing he adduced instance after instance where he openly opposed specific Communist undertakings, but in the nightmare context of a McCarthy hearing, documentary evidence of anti-Communism only adds up to sinister proof that the victim actually has obediently served the Kremlin. Thus, when Mr. Wechsler pointed out that the National Committee of the Communist Party proclaimed last winter that the failure of their Progressive Party candidate was due "to the policies of the Reuthers, Dubinskys, Wechslers, et al" Senator McCarthy shot back: "Did you have anything to do with the passage of that resolution? Did you take any part in promoting the passage of that resolution?"

A very small portion of the five-hour grilling of Wechsler was devoted to the book found in the American library abroad. In fact, no one seems to know for sure which one of Wechsler's four books was in question—a fairly important point since two of them, written in Wechsler's mature years, contain unmistakable anti-Communist passages; one, a biography of John L. Lewis, offers a full chapter devoted to bitter criticism of Communist tactics in the labor movement.

The main emphasis throughout the hearing was placed on the anti-McCarthy policy of Wechsler's paper. The editor was called upon to explain and defend this policy time and time again, though Mr. McCarthy seemed utterly uninterested in his explanations.

The Wechsler-McCarthy case seems to be a clearcut issue of Senatorial interference with the freedom of the press. It has been recognized as such by papers as distinguished as the independent New York *Times* and the enthusiastically Republican *Herald Tribune*.

Last fall a forthright Franciscan, Father Leon Sullivan, wrote in The Commonweal: "My missionary career in China ended in a Communist court in which accusations were taken as facts, charges as proofs, and in which the police announced that 'defense is not necessary; we never make a mistake; when we arrest you, you're guilty.' " With this experience behind him, the former missionary said frankly that he "would rather return to my Chinese prison cell than avail myself of Senator McCarthy's 'protection.' "

The transcript of the Wechsler hearing before McCarthy strikingly bears out this kinship between Communist methods and those of the Senator from Wisconsin. Senator McCarthy was generally "not interested" in Mr. Wechsler's voluminous evidence. When facts were introduced which went counter to McCarthy's charges against the editor, they were gratuitously twisted to fit into a new McCarthy theory: the only reason Wechsler has been such a consistent anti-Communist is that he has consistently remained a good Communist!

"*I* am the truth!" the commissar cries, and to that there is no answer except that all men are liars and what *is* only seems to be, because political necessity demands that the "truth" serve the cause.

It is clear that the Senator from Wisconsin and his die-hard followers find it psychologically impossible to believe that anti-Communism of a kind that does not agree with their own is genuine. They began long ago by denying its effectiveness; they proceeded then to deny its sincerity; now they have moved into that *univers concentrationnaire* where they are not even willing to accept it as a *fact* because it doesn't conform to the McCarthy "truth."

Something frightening, something alien and dark and not wholly unfamiliar is happening in American public life. We might be much closer to the essential evil of Communism than we think. Certainly we are tasting of forbidden fruit; we have lost our innocence in the age of totalitarian philosophies. Neither the Russians nor the Germans will find the Wechsler-McCarthy dialogue strange; it will have a distinctly familiar ring, recalling other grillings in other places.

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People and Food

"NO POLITICAL LEADER, HOWEVER POWERFUL, NO ECONOMIST, HOWEVER LEARNED, HAS THE SLIGHTEST RIGHT TO INTERFERE WITH THE BIRTH OF CHILDREN."

COLIN CLARK

CHILDREN are born in accordance with the wishes and consciences of their parents, and it is a matter of natural right that they should be. But there are now many people calling themselves Malthusians who say that children should not be born, or at any rate that they should be born only in very small numbers. The reason which they generally give is an economic one, though most of them have no qualifications to discuss economic problems.

Let us consider first the purely economic questions. A large part (but not all) of the economic activities of a modern industrial community are carried out under what economists call the Law of Increasing Return. These activities include large-scale manufacture, transport, postal communications, banking, insurance, and the like. The larger the scale on which these services are operated, the greater the possible consequential economies. To everyone engaged in any of these types of economic activity, therefore, an increasing population is an economic gain, not loss. A large and densely settled population is not only economically advantageous for these forms of production—it is, in many cases, a condition without which they could not exist.

The Law of Increasing Returns was not known to Malthus and other economists of his time. They knew only the Law of Diminishing Returns, which they thought universal but which we know to be only applicable in agriculture, mining, and handicraft. Most people who use the phrase "diminishing returns" do not understand its real meaning. In most countries the returns or output from agriculture are steadily increasing year by year. The Law of Diminishing Returns says only that if you cannot get additional capital, and cannot make use of new farming methods, then returns per head in a densely populated agricultural country will be less than in a less densely populated one.

But using more capital and better farming methods is precisely what progressive countries have done when faced with increasing populations. This is not just a theoretical speculation; it is an established fact. The agricultural population per square mile of cultivable land is about the same in Denmark as it is in Russia, but the returns per worker are five times as great in Denmark. A similar comparison could be made between Ireland and the Philippines.

The agricultural population per square mile of cultivable land in India is a matter of great concern to many people, and undoubtedly it is extremely high. But it is equally high in Italy, where the return per worker is more than twice what it is in India. If someone could explain to the Indian not how to operate milking machines and tractors but just the simple arts of dairying and fruit growing and rice cultivation as practiced by the Italian peasant, the Indian would within a few years be twice as well off as he is now.

The Dutch, a really successful farming people, have a rural population per square mile of cultivable land as much as two-thirds of the Indian, but the Dutch return per square mile is about six times the Indian. If all the cultivable land in the world were farmed at Dutch standards of skill and hard work, and our consumption per head of farm products was also at the present-day Dutch standard (which is quite a high one), then the world could support a population somewhere between ten and fifteen billion people as compared with the mere two billion three hundred million people it is supporting now.

This is before allowing for any future improvements in farming methods which may take place, or seeking any harvest from the sea. (The sea's capacities for

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photosynthesis, per square mile of surface, appear at any rate to be comparable with those of low-grade farm land.)

BEFORE we speculate further about the future of the human race, we ought to examine some of the concrete facts of history which Malthus appears to have ignored. The fact which stands out quite unmistakably is that rapid population increases are very rare events in history, and that for the greater part of its time on this earth the rate of growth of the human race was one of almost preternatural slowness, and there are many clearly authenticated historical instances of stationary or declining populations over long periods of time, in Egypt, Ceylon, India, and elsewhere.

It is obviously false to say that all these examples of stationary or declining population are explained by lack of food supply, or to be more precise, by lack of cultivable land. The population which India appeared to carry unchanged through so many past centuries was only about one-third of what it can carry now. The Arabic historian of the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldoun, answered Malthus centuries before he wrote, pointing out that what limited population was "not the land's incapacity to cope with increasing demand, but the political chaos and physical oppression which invade the state in its decline."

Even in the modern world, whose population has doubled in the course of a century and is far larger now than it has ever been before, cases of extreme population density, though undoubtedly serious, are by no means the general rule. India, Pakistan, Indochina, eastern China, Java, Egypt, perhaps some Middle Eastern and East European countries—that about exhausts the list. Nobody is seriously worried about dense populations in advanced industrial countries, which find it relatively easy to sell industrial products and to buy food in return.

Large areas of land climatically suitable for agriculture remain uncultivated in the modern world. Europe, outside Soviet Russia, has the equivalent of one million four hundred thousand square miles of cultivable land. On this Europe raises the greater part of the food supplies for four hundred and fifty million people. But North America has three million square miles of cultivable land for a far smaller population, while South America and Africa, also with much smaller populations, have six million square miles each.

Great areas of good cultivable land in Asia, many people will be surprised to hear, are uninhabited, in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Malaya, and the whole of Indonesia outside Java. Even in western China, according to O. E. Baker, there is a great deal of uninhabited, semi-arid land on which American or Australian farmers would have no difficulty in making a good living. I am aware, of course, that in many tropical areas which are climatically suitable for agriculture there are serious soil deficiencies. I have lived for years in the tropics myself, and once knew something about chemistry. All these soil deficiencies, of calcium, phosphorus, potassium, and nitrogen, can be replaced if we make sufficient effort to do so.

IN Malthus' time, in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the rate of population growth in Great Britain and Ireland, which had previously been very slow, rose to one per cent per annum. That was due not to any increase in size of family but solely to falling mortality. Though this increase was much less than the rate of population growth in many countries now, Malthus thought that it could not be borne, and should be somehow checked. He attracted a great deal of attention in intellectual circles, but fortunately his contemporaries, on the whole, had the sense not to listen to him. What would have happened if they had?

In the first place, medical research would have been slowed down or stopped. It is curious that in the same year in which Malthus' book on population was published, in 1798, Jenner announced the discovery of vaccination. Crude and dangerous as were the methods of Jenner and his contemporaries, they saved countless lives, particularly lives of children. For this reason Malthus opposed them. So obsessed was he with his theoretical "Laws of Population" that he stated that even if vaccination did succeed in checking deaths from smallpox, the only result would be that some other disease would shortly spring up which would leave the death-rate much where it had been before. Many modern Malthusians talk in almost exactly the same manner about the way in which modern medicines and hygiene are wiping out malaria and other endemic diseases in the Orient.

If his countrymen had listened to Malthus and let him have his way and restricted population growth, whether by hindering medical research or by preventing the birth of children, the whole balance of history would have been altered. On the continued population growth of these times, hard though they were for the people then living, depended the attainment of British world supremacy in the nineteenth century, and the prominent position in world affairs which Britain still holds. On it also depended the whole flow of emigrants to the New World; without it there would have been no Australia or New Zealand, no English-speaking settlers in Canada and South Africa, and the United States would probably have remained a small, weak, and undeveloped country. The Irish,

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atrocious as were the injustices perpetrated upon them by British parliaments, nevertheless are playing a vital role in the modern world through having contributed so much to the peopling of the United States and Australia, and the wide dissemination of their faith and their culture throughout the world. If Malthus had been taken seriously, these things could not have taken place.

The country where Malthus' teachings did have some effect was France, which in 1798 looked like dominating the world. It was Revolutionary France which first gave to the modern world the idea of legalizing divorce (which had been so marked a feature of the ancient Graeco-Roman world in its declining phase). As the experience of many other countries besides France also proved, the legalization of divorce was quickly followed by a decline in the family, and population growth ceased. Does not this have something to do with the fact that France is now in world affairs but a shadow of her former self, haunted by fear of nations over whom her tricolor was once borne triumphant as the banner of freedom?

But let it also be added that the country which first fell into the pit also looks like the first country to climb out of it. And following quickly in France's footsteps, there has been in the past few years a dramatic increase in size of family throughout Western Europe and North America. England is now the odd man out, practically the only country which is not producing enough children to provide for a fairly rapid population increase. Is it not probable that the decline in British influence in the world over the past thirty years is largely due to the fact that the rest of the world now knows that its population is stationary, and is likely to remain so for many years to come, while that of most other countries is rapidly increasing?

THE comparatively rare occasions in history in which there have been rapid and sustained increases of population are all well worth studying. England's, starting about 1750, was one. There was a somewhat similar case among the Japanese, whose population began to increase rapidly after the westernizing reforms of 1868, due in this case both to declining mortality, and to the discouragement of infanticide and abortion. The Dutch had to face the same problem much earlier, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And one perfectly clear example of rapid population increase among a people with only a limited area of cultivable land was among the ancient Greeks, about the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.

For each of these peoples—the Greeks, the Dutch, the English, and the Japanese—the period of rapid population growth, though it undoubtedly meant economic hardships in the early stages, proved in the end to be not a disaster but a glorious national opportunity. Each country made an effort—and a very strenuous effort it had to be—to convert itself from an agrarian to a commercial society, emigrating, manufacturing and exporting, buying food from the less densely populated regions of the world. These periods of population expansion were also periods of great scientific, cultural, or artistic achievement as well as of economic advancement. Though each did, at times, go to war with its neighbors, I think it can easily be shown that both economic and cultural development would have proceeded more rapidly if these wars could have been avoided.

And is this not the answer for the densely populated but underdeveloped countries in the modern world, in the Orient and in the Middle East—a program of rapid industralization and national development such as these people undertook? If a country cannot produce enough food, it must manufacture goods and exchange them for food produced in the less densely populated parts of the world. The initial stages are admittedly hard, but it is the surest solution in the long run. And certain other densely populated countries, such as Italy and Japan, are already through the most difficult stages and will soon complete their development as industrial exporters.

Can I now detect some cloven hoof in our reasoning? There is a narrow and greedy type of businessman who supports Malthusian propaganda simply because he hates the idea of Indians and Japanese competing with him for export markets. Can I see the academic scientist, objectively minded but not very well informed on economic and geographical facts, unwittingly becoming his bedfellow?

Many perfectly disinterested scientists who have joined the Malthusian movement should stop and consider the highly unsavory nature of such imperialistic bedfellows, and ask themselves what sort of reputation this Malthusian talk is going to get us with other countries.

A deeper issue than economics is raised by Malthusianism—the whole nature and purpose of man. Is man to be regarded as the end or the means? Is the economic system of the world there for the purpose of serving man, or are we entitled to ignore the natural rights and duties of man if we can thereby, as we think, make the economic system work better? Was economics made for man, or man made for economics? I do not see that we can have any hesitation about the answer. No political leader, however powerful, no economist, however learned, has the slightest right to interfere with the birth of children. No—it is the other way round: it is parents who have the right to demand that prime ministers and economists so organize the world that children have enough to eat.

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A Jew Looks at Catholics

COMMENTS MADE IN THE HOPE THAT AMERICAN CATHOLICS WILL SEE THEMSELVES AS A FRIENDLY OUTSIDER SEES THEM.

WILL HERBERG

CATHOLICISM in America today stands at its highest point of prestige and spiritual power. It is not hard to see why this should be so in this country as elsewhere in the Western world. In an age when the vacuities of "rationalism" and unbelief have become so painfully evident, Catholicism presents the picture of a dynamic faith sure of itself and capable of preserving its substance and power despite elaborate institutionalization. In an age of spiritual chaos and disorientation, Catholicism stands forth as the keeper of an enduring tradition that has weathered the storms of the past and stands unshaken amidst the disasters of our time. In an age of social disintegration and the resurgence of every kind of narrow particularism, Catholicism speaks for and exemplifies a universalism transcending, though not negating, state and nation, culture and civilization. In an age disillusioned with the claims and pretensions of both individualism and collectivism, Catholicism is recognized as the long-time advocate of a "third way," a society built on Christian responsibility, the society defined in the papal encyclicals and the "social teachings" of the Church. Finally, in an age characterized by a total assault on the human spirit, Catholicism has distinguished itself as the "friend of man and of culture," to employ the expression of a well-known Protestant theologian.

The stand of the Church for the dignity of man, today so gravely threatened by the upsurge of demonic totalitarianism, has impressed itself on many a secularist thinker of our time and has won ungrudging tribute from men otherwise hostile to everything the Church represents. Nor should it be overlooked that the Church's intransigent opposition to Communism, in contrast to the confusion, vacillation, or worse, prevalent in so many Protestant groups, has had a profound effect on the American people, leading them to regard the Church as "on our side" in a way that would have been unthinkable not so many years ago.

All of these statements seem to me to be true and important, but they are not the purpose of this article. What I want to do in these paragraphs is not simply to pay tribute to the Church, even where tribute is so manifestly due; it is my purpose rather, taking the above generalizations as to the Church's enhanced position for granted, to make some comments of a critical nature from the point of view of a believing Jew who is deeply concerned with religion in its relation to the social and cultural problems of our time. It is my hope that these comments will prove of some use in helping American Catholics see themselves as a friendly outsider sees them.

PERHAPS because of the Catholic position on Natural Law, Catholics sometimes seem to forget that man's "natural" reason is both limited by his creatureliness and distorted by his sinful egocentricity. As a consequence, Catholic thinking in the social and cultural spheres is often too apt and too ready to make black-and-white distinctions and thereby to lapse into premature absolutisms. How easy it is for Catholics to write off a thinker such as John Dewey or Sidney Hook as "secularist" and "irreligious," without realizing that the secular thinker may sometimes serve the divine purpose in a way that is not given to the conventional believer.

On the other hand, the same tendency towards making black-and-white distinctions leads many a Catholic to give too ready and too total an endorsement to institutions and cultures that are on the "right" side. There is in much Catholic thinking what can only be called a certain optimism, a certain cheeriness even, a tendency to smile indulgently upon the world and pat it on the back; as a matter of fact, a good case could be made out for the contention that today it is the Catholic who, in his enthusiasm for the natural powers of man, has quite unwittingly come to occupy the position vacated by the disillusioned votary of the liberal doctrine of progress. This may surprise those who tend to think of Catholics as gloomy ascetics absorbed in brooding over sin. These are not the Catholics I know, either personally or in their writings. Indeed, my criticism adds up to the charge that Catholics do not take sin and the human predicament re-

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sulting from sin seriously enough and therefore tend to overlook the profound ambiguity of all our thinking and doing.

Another way of phrasing this criticism, a characteristically "Jewish" way, is to say that in Catholicism, in this country at least, the "priestly" element is predominant, very much at the expense of the "prophetic." I mean, putting the matter a little too crudely perhaps, that there is too much cultivation of the traditional, the conventional, the regular, and too little readiness to break bounds and venture forth. Catholic thinking, by and large, is too much preoccupied with self-congratulation and self-justification and altogether too little concerned with self-criticism. There is not enough appreciation of the profound insight expressed in Reinhold Niebuhr's maxim relating to our social and political convictions: "We must fight their falsehood with our truth, but at the same time fight the falsehood in our own truth." This, it seems to me, is the true "prophetic" spirit, and it is this which I find lacking in much of American Catholicism.

On another level, the same tendency is expressed in the Catholic readiness to identify the Christian cause with the particular temporal interests of the Church. Such readiness shows little awareness of the perils and ambiguities of power, even where power is exercised in or by the Church. Examples of this tendency abound.

Catholicism does of course preach the doctrine of Original Sin, but in their own corporate life and practice American Catholics show too little sense of standing under the continuing judgment of God, which shatters all our pretensions and calls into question all our easy certainties and assurances. This would be my basic criticism of American Catholicism as I know it.

IN contemporary American life, Catholicism plays a notably constructive role. It needs no proof, I think, that on labor and most social questions, American Catholicism is emphatically on the side of the angels. On the basic issue of church and state, particularly in education, the Catholic position, Reinhold Niebuhr has testified, is:

> democratic in two senses of the term. It resists the claim of the state to enforce uniform education in the name of the right of parents to give their children an education according to their convictions. It is also democratic in the sense that a Christian viewpoint emphasizes the true dimensions of the individual, as having his ultimate authority and fulfilment above the political community and social process in which he is involved (*Christianity and Crisis*, Feb. 2, 1953).

We may acknowledge this freely and gratefully; yet the question arises in the non-Catholic's mind—and it must be recognized as a very disturbing question—whether the liberal, democratic, pluralistic emphasis of Catholicism in America is for the Church a matter of basic principle or merely a passing counsel of expediency and necessity, motivated by its present minority status. Suppose Catholics were to become an overwhelming majority and non-Catholics "numerically insignificant" in this country, what then? Ryan and Millar, in their treatise *The State and the Church*, tell us in effect that in such a case Catholics would use their power to repeal the First Amendment, establish the Catholic Church as the state church, and outlaw free proselytizing activities on the part of non-Catholics, who would, however, be permitted religious practices "in the family or in such inconspicuous manner as to be an occasion neither of scandal nor of perversion of the faithful"! Is this to be taken as authoritative Catholic doctrine? American Jews, who prize the First Amendment as the charter of their freedom as a minority group, are very much concerned to know.

I KNOW that recently there has been made a serious effort—I am thinking of Jacques Maritain and Courtney Murray, among others—to restate Catholic doctrine in such a way as to make it quite unequivocal in its democratic-pluralist emphasis. I am much impressed with the thinking of these men, but do they speak for the Church? The violent opposition to Maritain in certain Catholic quarters is well known, and I myself have been warned on more than one occasion against the insidious influence of "Courtney Murrayism." In short, what *are* the long-range purposes and intentions of the Church in these matters so central to the concern of every democratic American, particularly of every American Jew?

The question is rendered all the more urgent by the fact that Catholics in America as elsewhere have sometimes used the power that has fallen to them in certain localities in ways that have suggested the intention of enforcing Church doctrine and making it binding on non-Catholics as well. The recent demand that the Welfare and Health Council of New York deny the affiliation of the Planned Parenthood Federation on pain of Catholic withdrawal may serve as an example; so too may the unhappy affair in Poughkeepsie, where non-Catholic doctors were dropped from a Catholic community hospital because of their membership in a birth control group and were reinstated only after considerable public pressure. The Church has, of course, the full right to condemn contraception and to prohibit the faithful from resorting to it; but have Catholics the right, is it in conformity

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with the democratic *ethos,* to use their power, as they have in more than one state, to prevent non-Catholics from resorting to it?

Other examples come to mind, but they need not be recounted here. I am not suggesting that the American people anywhere are groaning under a Catholic despotism or that we are threatened with one; that would be nonsense. Nor am I singling out Catholics to condemn for misusing power; every group tends to misuse power to the degree that it possesses it without check, and that applies to Protestants, Jews, and secularists as well. What I am saying is that Catholic doctrine on the use of power by Catholics remains painfully ambiguous, and until that ambiguity is cleared up, the Catholic position in the American community will always in some sense remain a difficult one.

EQUALLY serious, more serious indeed in its immediate consequences, is the practical secularism that pervades American Catholic life (no more, to be sure, than it pervades American Protestant or American Jewish life, but it is of Catholics that I am speaking here). It may seem strange to charge such doughty champions of religion as American Catholics with secularism, but what is secularism but the outlook in which religion is separated from life and relegated to a purely private status, peripheral to the vital areas of economics, politics, and culture, which are held to have autonomous non-religious foundations? What is secularism, in short, but the conviction that "business is business," the affair of the businessman, just as "religion" is the affair of the priest? In this sense, secularism quite pervades the thinking of large numbers of American Catholics—a fact testified to by a familiar Catholic attitude which resents papal encyclicals on labor and industry as an intrusion of religion into a sphere where it does not properly belong.

The case of Joseph P. Ryan, the indicted president of the International Longshoremen's Association, is significant. Mr. Ryan is a Catholic and a trustee of the Guardian Angel Church in New York City. The pastor of this church is also port chaplain of New York. According to the press, he recently expressed his conception of the relation of religion to life in these words: "He [Mr. Ryan] keeps his hands off the spiritual things of my church and I keep my hands out of his business."

The same secularist doctrine has tended to obscure responsibility for political corruption and civic mismanagement perpetrated by "good" church-going Catholics; Boston, I should say, offers quite an object lesson. No one proposes that the Church directly intervene in politics or business or labor affairs, but it seems to me it ought not to be possible, as it manifestly is today, to be held a "good" Catholic without regard to what one does in his business, politics, or professional life. "Spiritual things" and "business" belong together, and when they are kept apart, it is "business," the common life, that is degraded, and the Church that is devaluated and discredited.

Because of this pervasive secularism, American Catholicism often allows itself to be caught up in the narrowness and petty prejudices of its environment. European observers, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, have marvelled at the prudishness of American Catholics in matters of sex, an attitude so foreign to classical Catholic tradition. A good deal of this is probably an Irish heritage, but not entirely; the influence of American Protestant moralism is also a major factor. The slightest hint of sexual suggestiveness is pounced upon as the work of the devil, while movies, stories, and advertising that quite shamelessly strive to excite pride, envy, hate, and covetousness (sins rather high up on the list) go by without a word of censure. Here American Catholics are most deplorably untrue to Catholicism.

I referred earlier to the tendency in Catholicism to smile indulgently upon men and pat them on the back, as it were. Catholicism thus comes forward as the friend of man, whereas Protestantism, with its unrelenting emphasis on judgment, sometimes appears as his enemy. But this same spiritual geniality, combined with the secularism to which I have alluded, often betrays Catholics into too easy an acquiescence in the banalities, timidities, and mediocrities of everyday life—provided they do not violate the conventional decencies. The utter mediocrity of so much of American Catholicism is to me a most shocking thing. How many times have I heard an intelligent and deeply sensitive Catholic say deprecatingly: "Oh, you can't expect too much of them; after all, they're only human . . ."—as if to be human meant to be commonplace and mediocre! Why is American Catholicism so uncreative, when compared with European? Why does it show so little appreciation of the great cultural treasures of its own tradition? There are many reasons, but I suggest that one of the most important is a deplorable readiness among many American Catholics of culture and intelligence to compromise with stupidity, stodginess, and mediocrity, so long as these keep within the bounds of "morality."

Mediocrity is reinforced by the tendency towards separatism and seclusiveness that is characteristic of much of American Catholic life. I refer not primarily to the vast network of special Catholic institutions and agencies, from academic associations and church schools to singing societies and sports clubs, which parallel the general community institutions; these most-

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ly serve a useful purpose. What I have in mind rather is a kind of "secessionist" spirit that keeps the Catholic busy about his own Catholic affairs and leaves the business of the community, except politics, of course, largely to non-Catholics.

My university lecturing schedule and other interests brought me to a considerable number of cities and towns in various parts of the country during the past two years, and everywhere, I think, I found the same situation and heard the same complaints. "Oh, they're very nice," Protestants and Jews would say when I asked about the Catholics, "but they're never around; they keep to themselves and don't take part in things. They've got their own concerns. . . ." It is this same attitude perhaps that accounts for the strange indifference of so many Catholic educators to the problems of public education: their own special Catholic problem they feel they have solved, at least in principle, through the parochial school; the public school, even though it is attended by the great bulk of American children and Catholics are frequently quite influential in its administration, does not seem to strike them as a particular concern of theirs.

This feeling is undoubtedly in good part a carry-over from an earlier time when Catholics were indeed excluded from general community life; a good deal of it too may be traced to the logic inherent in the system of dual institutions that has been built up. But much of this attitude, it seems to me, is the indirect consequence of a deliberate policy of secluding Catholics in order to protect them from "contamination." I have heard this policy explicitly defended on more than one campus. though it is certainly not the rule at American colleges today. It seems to me unfortunate on all counts: it is utterly ineffective; it leads to a kind of social and intellectual isolationism which fosters narrowness and stagnation; and it is manifestly prejudicial to the position of Catholics in American life. Catholics are no longer aliens and outcasts in America; they have not been for some time—and they ought to cease acting as if they thought they were.

THE criticisms I have made in this article are criticisms not of Catholic teaching but of attitudes and practices that seem to me to be essentially untrue to Catholic doctrine and tradition; as such, they have on occasion been made by Catholic critics themselves. They are made in good faith to help American Catholics see themselves as others see them and thus to enhance the possibilities of frank, openhearted cooperation among those who, as Christians or as Jews, serve the living God in the common cause and the common hope.

(The next article in this series, "Catholics and American Democracy," by John Cogley, will appear in the June 5 issue.)

FROM ITALY

The Artless Art Of Italian Films

Rome

JUST after the end of the war Italian prestige reached one of its lowest points in history. The Italians were not feared and hated like the Germans, but were despised by Allies and Germans alike, who had found nothing but bottomless corruption in Italy. Italy was showing its worst side; even many Italians despaired. Among them was Mussolini, who during his humiliating idleness towards the end, when he seemed just another German puppet, wrote an interesting and practically unknown essay about his country, asking the rhetorical question: Is it an eclipse, or a sunset?

The first signs that Italy was rising again, that this ancient race was about to show an amazing and youthful vitality, were the postwar Italian films. One after another they shocked and fascinated the world. Roberto Rossellini's "Open City" was just an imperfect beginning. The Italian films shot past the French and English, and conquered second place after America's. Italy proved able to smile at its own decay, able to show it and even to exaggerate it. And in this humility was the secret to overcoming decadence.

THE best new Italian films were humble and brutally sincere, and they gained worldwide prestige beyond calculation. This generation of bold young film directors, and these actors and actresses, many of them in their teens, deserve the profound gratitude of their countrymen—who do not seem to realize it. For the best postwar Italian films have had a far bigger success outside Italy than they have had inside Italy itself.

There are paradoxical aspects of this Italian film renaissance which explain its growth and supply the background for its successes. As the Italian film directors welcome and encourage international collaboration, there are now nearly as many American actors working in Italy, temporarily at least, as there are European actors working in Hollywood. And these non-Italian actors all meet with the same surprises when they begin their work in Italy. They invariably see at first a disturbing dilemma: either the Italians are all wrong in their methods and will be unable to carry on over the long run, or Hollywood is all wrong and

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has entered a blind alley. Most finally settle on something of a compromise. The French director, René Clair, who has a critical attitude towards the Italians' neo-realism, thinks the technique is possible only in Italy, with Italians. In any other country, he says, a man picked up in the street and put in front of a movie camera would be paralyzed by inhibitions. Not so the Italian.

But this technique of taking people from the streets who are naturally gifted as actors often has its deeply tragic hidden side. One of the most moving is the case of Lamberto Maggiorani of "The Bicycle Thief," discovered by director Vittorio De Sica. This film was undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary of the post-war hits, for it was not only a success throughout the Western world, but behind the Iron Curtain too, where it was seen as displaying an aspect of corrupt capitalist society.

Not even a fabulous first prize in a lottery or an unexpected inheritance could have more suddenly or more brutally changed the poverty-stricken Maggiorani's life. But it was too much for him and fortune proved only to be cruel. As soon as Maggiorani had cashed the rather modest check he received for his acting, he naturally thought himself ready for new and greater triumphs. But he proved to be unable to do anything beyond that particular part in that particular film. Now he is a broken man, convinced that he is cheated and persecuted by unknown enemies. However he is unable to leave the cinema, which allowed him to live this short and lovely dream. Out of charity he has been given a humble job working with the electrical equipment, directing the limelight on others. What a story for a new film! But not with Maggiorani. . . .

THE new generation of very young Italian film actresses make up a world of their own. They are infinitely less artificial than most of the Hollywood stars, as types as well as personalities, and this does not seem due simply to their extreme youth. Many of them, like Pier Angeli, were discovered while they were schoolgirls as young as fifteen.

In this, the Italian directors are returning to a very old tradition for choosing ideals of feminine beauty, the tradition of many Italian and Flemish painters of the past, whose models were teenagers. Some of the actresses have, like the famous models of the past, only their beauty to offer. But others actively and intelligently collaborate with the director in planning the picture.

The extreme youth of these girls has another rather unexpected consequence in a century when youth is more and more emancipated. Their mothers stay with them and keep an eye on them. The mothers, and occasionally even the fathers, of the Italian starlets have a recognized importance hard to imagine in the United States or in Northern Europe. This protection has its economic consequences too, for contracts with the girls often have to include mama, who travels with the starlet, knitting and reading while her daughter performs. A well-known nineteen-year-old Italian starlet recently took her mother with her over three continents while making a film.

Among the girls there are "shooting stars" like Maggiorani of "The Bicycle Thief," who are brilliant once and never act again. The spitfire heroine of Renato Castellani's prize-winning "Two Cents Worth of Hope" is one of these. The picture's cast was entirely non-professional, and the film recounted the lives of heart-breakingly poor people in a small village near Naples. Maria Fiore is the girl's name, and she was discovered in a slumlike suburb of Rome. Her performance in the film was marked by a extraordinary, almost animal-like vitality. According to the experts she is "burned out," and thus far has proved unable to do another role. Like Maggiorani, she too is unable to understand why, and feels deeply frustrated.

There are other pathetic cases like hers, actresses who are nothing but the creations of the director, discovered by him and used by him for a certain determined role, again like the masters' models. Most of these "shooting stars" are unable to return to the dull life they came from, and sometimes finish in cheap sex shows, still clinging to the hope of a motion picture comeback.

ANOTHER strange aspect of the Italian cinema is its political background. Almost all the producers are strongly conservative and even reactionary to a point which would shock the average American, and they share that attitude with almost all employers in Italy in all fields of business and industry. On the other hand, the directors and practically all the actors are leftists and many of them are Communists or at least fellow-travelers, like the aristocratic director, Luchino Visconti, who belongs to a famous old family of Northern Italy, and Anna Magnani, who is perhaps the most gifted of all Italian actresses. In spite of this, it would never occur to the most reactionary producer to refuse to hire a certain actor just because he is a Communist. Business is business. Likewise a Communist

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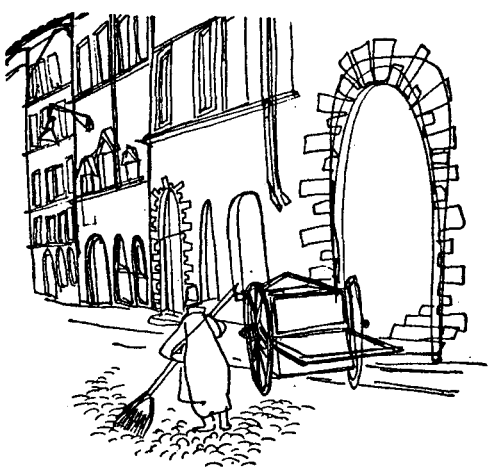
director would never hesitate to accept a proposal from the most reactionary producer. Politics are simply ignored on both sides when films are made, and the political extremes somehow neutralize each other. That is no doubt one reason that Italian films are so human and capable of being appreciated both in the West and in the world of the "peoples democracies"—which is quite an accomplishment.

The leftism of the Italian actors, which exists in spite of personal wealth and prestige, is not based on the usual reasons. It boils down to a sometimes violent reaction against what they call "bourgeois rhetoric," or bourgeois cant. The bourgeois class in all the Latin countries is considered to be intoxicated and poisoned by its own rhetoric, be it the hollow rhetoric of feelings, or the literary brand, which has found its best expression in Gabriele d'Annunzio and which Bernard Berenson describes as "the high-falutin, bulging, pompous periods that Italians acquire at school and college, and feed on for the rest of their lives." And finally there is the dangerous and patriotic political brand of rhetoric represented by Fascism.



The reaction against the bourgeois attitude carries with it a sort of worship of the proletariat, who are considered to be innocent of bourgeois intoxication. The Italian cinema therefore is desperately trying to be as free from rhetoric as the proletariat is free. That is why it prefers to deal with the poor and the workers, or if it deals with the bourgeoisie to show the world its corruption and hollowness. There is the same tendency within Italian literature, but the cinema achieves it better because it is a younger art and is less attached to tradition.

Finally there is an aspect worth noting against the background of Catholic influence on American film production. Italy is almost entirely Catholic. It is governed by a Catholic majority. It has film censorship, and yet its films are universally recognized as among the boldest and best in the world.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE STAGE

MODEST PROPOSALS

MR. Truman's Capote's poetic fantasy, "The Grass Harp," has provoked the Circle-in-the-Square to another distinguished exhibition of theatrical sensibility. A fashionable success uptown last year, "The Grass Harp" could not quite command that wider support which would sustain its expensive outlay. To outraged protests it closed, was duly entered on Broadway's brutal ledgers as a failure, and just as promptly joined that notorious company of plays supposedly murdered by the neglect of a gross and boorish public.

There is a special merit in revivals such as this: they permit us to lay old ghosts, and clear the cultural climate. A fresh (and for this reporter, initial) experience of "The Grass Harp" disclosed expected weaknesses and unexpected strength. Mr. Capote excels as the dramatist of sensibility, of the small, the delicate and eccentric; he displays, moreover, the essential flintiness of mind from which a good scene may be struck. In drama, of course, he misses inevitably the lyric dimension; and I found the highly sophisticated naivete which informs the original novel seriously diminished. What remains is a set of rather dressy platitudes. But "The Grass Harp" is still an honorable work: it has all the virtues of minor art—virtues which would receive *amour propre* in times less obsessed with aesthetic elephantiasis than our own.

Mr. Jose Quintero's production was designed to illumine these virtues. Even his arena staging—an oppressive form, about the possibilities of which I am not generally sanguine—was manipulated with impeccable tact and discretion. He sought always to clarify, never to obscure, with the result that a net of the finest transparency enclosed his best moments.

The cast—headed by Clarice Blackburn and Estelle Omens as the Talbo sisters, Ray Stricklyn as young Collin and Ruth Attaway as the omniscient Catherine—inhabits always an area of grace and distinction. Their approach—and I should suppose that also of Mr. Quintero, the shaping spirit—is a curious one: plangent and melancholy, marked (excessively, perhaps) by an intense evocation of mood. It is a style which one may call, without deceit or embarrassment, poetic; it has the clarity and sensitivity, the quiet understatement and emotional control of the best contemporary verse. How work of a different weight and texture would support such technique, I cannot say. But Mr. Capote surely could not have asked for a more sober and responsible production.

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IN the same week, a provocative ensemble, The Artists Theatre, presented—under private auspices and before an illustrious audience—a new play by Mr. Parker Tyler, the noted poet and film critic.

Mr. Tyler described his work, "The Screen," as a metaphysical comedy; a more precise definition would be—a satire of serious assumption. It posits for our contemplation a static situation (explored on both symbolic and actual levels) involving two women and one man. The theme—worried by Mr. Tyler in frequently tedious detail—would seem to center about the dissatisfactions and inadequacies of the modern feminine temperament. The point of view here, however, is not that of the inflamed, partisan Mlle. de Beauvoir, but rather of the detached, ironic yet crucially involved male.

Mr. Tyler's mind is elusive, sophisticated and Freudian in orientation. He writes at this point with more feeling for the stage than knowledge of it; a more experienced dramatist would, for example, have permitted an occasional relaxation of such cerebral, compact dialogue. But Mr. Tyler commands the attention even while he exasperates it; and if "The Screen" is essentially a contemporary closet drama, it nonetheless introduces a stimulating and sophisticated intelligence into our theatre.

Mr. Herbert Machiz's direction brought a maximum theatrical intensity to these subtle and provocative meditations. He succeeded in conveying visually what Mr. Tyler sought in language: something of the *brio* and timbre of a certain layer of intellectual American society. And despite the raw edges of immaturity, a cast of four—Lee Saunders, Eileen Ryan, Jack Cannon and Van Williams—carried the play with remarkable charm and conviction. Dramatic gestures such as "The Grass Harp" and "The Screen" nourish the theatre at its waning and exhausted source. Involving, as each does, so much enthusiasm and talent and spirit, one hesitates to damn them with the faint praise of "experimental," but within the conventions of our current situation, the term has become, I should say, an honorable one.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

OLD HICKORY SMOKED

THE story of the married life of Andrew Jackson and Rachel Donelson Robards, "The President's Lady" is a splurge in Americana covering the years from 1787 to 1829. Under the direction of Henry Levin, Charlton Heston and Susan Hayward in the main roles and John McIntire and Fay Bainter leading a large supporting cast, do their best to give this strange tale a tone of reality. At times Miss Hayward is a little fancier in speech and looks than the real Rachel; but she's not afraid to grub in the dirt when the script so requires—and the script so requires often. Heston is consistently convincing as Jackson—courageous soldier, romantic lover, astute politician, bad-tempered, often irrational man—who became one of our best Presidents. But the story, even in the literate script written by John Patrick from the novel by Irving Stone, and based as it is on fact, just doesn't seem credible. It is without doubt one of those fact-is-stranger-than-fiction affairs. When you see Jackson, supposedly a smart lawyer, marrying Rachel Robards before she is legally divorced from the heel who was her first husband, and when you consider that Andrew and Rachel lived together on their little farm in Tennessee for two years before they discover their mistake, you begin to wonder just how smart the lawyer was who got himself into this situation. Mr. Robards did sue for divorce and had no trouble winning his case on the grounds of adultery. The Jacksons were remarried and were happy together for many years, but were never able to live down the scandal linked to their names. Society was particularly cruel to Rachel (the film almost tries to make a martyred saint out of her), and Andrew felt impelled to fight duel after duel to avenge the insults heaped upon them. His campaign for the Presidency in 1828 was one of the bitterest and meanest in history, with the opposition carrying placards about not wanting a whore in the White House.

The production of "The President's Lady" deserves the highest praise; but its content left me skeptical. The problems in it presented more problems—not only about divorce (and the mess into which the Jacksons got themselves) but also about man's inhumanity toward man.

IT will be interesting to see how American audiences take to "Fanfan the Tulip," which has already been tremendously popular in France. "Fanfan" is a comedy-adventure movie about a French legendary hero who in the time of Louis XV got himself into all kinds of scrapes on battlefields and in bedrooms and wound up the ever-victorious swordsman and wit ready for the next episode.

As played by Gerard Philipe, Fanfan has charm and bubbling *joie de vivre* as he dashes from duels to romances. But moviegoers familiar with the Fairbanks' films (both *pere* and *fils*) and those made recently by Burt Lancaster, who has a flare for this kind of kidding of historically romantic swashbuckling, will agree that the American products have considerable edge over this French attempt.

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Producer-director Christian-Jaque has given his film a rapid pace; and certainly the gowns of Gina Lollobrigida (who plays the very pretty heroine) are cut lower than they ever are in American films; and the sexy story has more daring. But Philipe and his companions lack the athletic agility of our more dashing heroes. For audiences who don't speak French, Irving Drutman's English adaptation and subtitles, and the commentary spoken by Hiram Sherman are helpful. It will be fun to watch the cinema snobs who think every foreign-language film is a superior product come to the defense of "Fanfan the Tulip." There will probably be a few who will.

IT will also be fun to watch the cinematic Anglophiles try to build up a case for "Penny Princess," an English musical film now playing here. The English have made so many pleasant comedies, with and without Alec Guinness, that we are inclined to be predisposed toward their efforts along these lines. So when something like "Penny Princess," which is meant to be light and gay, falls with a thud, we are taken aback. It is the story of a Macy's salesgirl who inherits the tiny European State of Lampidorra, where the national industry is smuggling. With the help of an English cheese salesman (Dirk Bogarde), this American (Yolande Donlan) goes to work at once to change the deplorable state of affairs.

The color in "Penny Princess" is pretty and the outdoor scenes photographed in Spain are lovely; but Van Guest, who produced, wrote and directed it seems to have had no feeling for the light, operatic touch which the story needed. And the cast which has been assembled proves no great help.

MOVIEGOERS old enough to remember and those young enough to care should be delighted with "The Freshman," the Harold Lloyd film that won so much applause in 1925. It has stood up very well through the years, and although the sound track added now (music and noises, but no voices) doesn't help very much, the fun and pathos are still there.

Harold Lloyd still seems wonderful as the great American boob who has to go through frustration and heartbreak to learn that he should stop pretending and just be his charming self. He goes to Tate ("a large football stadium with a college") where he tries too hard to be the popular college favorite. The dance he gives (at which his tuxedo rips) and the football game (in which as water boy he finally gets a chance to carry the ball) are still two of the funniest scenes ever to appear in movies. "The Freshman remains an authentic piece of Americana.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Tawney As Christian Socialist

GEOFFREY ASHE

FIVE years ago, when Bevan's Health Service was making its triumphant bow, his friends the editors of *Tribune* printed a nasty little item concerning the Catholic Church in its relations to liberty, with some familiar stuff about the English Reformation and Civil War. I (being then a humble hanger-on of their book department) sent in a reply, suggesting the point of view that the standard Socialist conception of English history was just a debased version of a myth propagated by Macaulay. Shortly afterwards the Literary Editor wrote to me in courteous terms saying he couldn't see why I still wanted to be associated with *Tribune*. I told him that, for my part, *I* couldn't see why Labor thinking had to be tied to an outmoded fiction. And a certain name came up—the name of a retiring yet influential scholar, one of the staunchest and wisest friends the Labor Party ever acquired, who, nevertheless, had long since blown its doctrine of history to smithereens.

That scholar, Professor R. H. Tawney, is happily still with us. *The Attack* [Harcourt, Brace. $4.50] contains twelve essays, written irregularly during the last forty years or so, but not hitherto published in book form. The implication of a small literary output is not misleading. Tawney has made himself felt as a teacher rather than a writer, both on the academic level and through the Workers' Educational Association. His books are few. That does not matter. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* is enough to immortalize anybody

The Attack is a rather odd collection, not unified yet not frankly miscellaneous. It includes some capable reporting on the 1914 war and on the China of Chiang Kai-shek, both of which the author saw for himself. But the greater part of it consists of memoirs, lectures, and articles approaching from one angle or another the theme of Socialism. The first of these is enlightening. It seems that in 1934, when the ruined Labor Party was trying to retrieve its fortunes by turning respectable, Tawney exhorted it to do the exact opposite. MacDonald's Government, he said, ought to have fought for Socialism boldly and failed gloriously. It was the duty of Labor leaders to fight as MacDonald had never dared, and so discover, when the hour struck, that they need not fail at all.

In other words, the historian who saw through the Reformation and stood up for Charles the First was politically—where? Among the Tories or the Fascists? No. He was far over to the Left when the so-called Left itself (what remained of it) was creeping abjectly to the Right.

THERE is something solid in Tawney, something rooted and unflinching. Having set his hand to the plough, he never looked back. Two of these collected essays are devoted to Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whose quiet, cumulative, ultimately colossal achievement he greatly admired. As they delved deeper and deeper into English realities, and saw more and more of the political process, the Webbs moved Leftward, taking their Fabian creation along with them. Tawney concurred, up to a point. But his Christian belief restrained him from following the Fabian patriarchs into pro-Bolshevism.

It is this belief of his that must chiefly concern an inquiring reader. Tawney's religious Socialism, or Socialistic religion, sets him arrestingly apart from most of his colleagues of the Left.

Of course there is a great deal of loose talk about Christianity in the British Labor Party, some of it in curious quarters. During the Attlee era, the central organization actually cautioned Party speakers against the free use of Biblical texts; whereupon a rebellious editorial in defense of Scripture inundated the front page of *Tribune*. But most of this alleged Christianity of the British Left is the vaguest sort of ethical phrase-making.

Tawney's awareness of the Christian religion as a *thing*, as a set of potent beliefs institutionally embodied, has endowed him with a historical penetration such as few others in the British Labor movement have shown. Laski could talk sense about the French Revolution, but even he talked nonsense about the English one. After reading *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, one wonders how some Socialists have the nerve to invoke its author's name.

TWO papers in *The Attack* express Tawney's attitude to the Churches today. Here he is still judicious, but, I think, less so than in his classic work.

He rightly rejects the "opium for the masses" theory, and retorts the charge very aptly on Marxism itself. At the same time, again rightly, he censures the official Church organizations for their undue conservatism. What is interesting here is that he singles out the Anglican Church. In America, it would be natural enough to pick on the Episcopal body. But in Eng-

Mr. Ashe has written on literary and political subjects for journals in both England and America.

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land, nine Leftists out of ten (at least among the intellectuals) would speak first of Catholicism.

Statistically, Tawney is right. The Catholic Church in England has been almost forced by long persecution into a restless, criticizing position. Of twenty Catholic MP's, sixteen are Labor. The Labor Party gets the votes of seventy per cent of the Catholic community, with little clerical opposition. On this subject, however, there seems to be a conspiracy of silence. It would be hard to guess from *Tribune* or the *New Statesman* that any Catholics vote Labor at all. I well remember the surprise of a Labor candidate who canvassed Buckfast Abbey as a forlorn hope and found the monks rallying round him.

But although Tawney's ecclesiastical insight is more acute than that of his colleagues, the recommendations which he offers are questionable. Here he does approach rather too closely to the conventional shallow Christian Socialism of the Left. He very nearly says—possibly he quite says—that Socialism ought to be preached as an article of faith: "Whatever may have been true of its past, Capitalism today, except in so far as qualified by influences derived from other sources and long resisted by it, is not so much un-Christian as anti-Christian. . . . The duty of the Christian Churches is not only to act on the individual conscience. It is also to affirm openly and ceaselessly that men can fulfil the purpose of God only in so far as they follow what has been called above the distinctively Christian way of life. It is to insist that all forms of economic and social organization which hinder that way of life . . . stand *ipso facto* condemned, and that it is the obligation of Christians to replace them by others."

The alternative proposed is Social-Democracy—not the rule of the proletariat, but government for the general good, which is said to mean nationalized industry and the Welfare State. This is the policy of the Labor Party, despite Bevanite advocacy of class war, and the Conservative Party has more or less adopted it. Nevertheless, Tawney's implied proposition that no dissenter is, or ever was, a true Christian, is surely dubious.

The central idea which Tawney has been stressing for many years is that of Responsibility. In *The Acquisitive Society* (1920) he urged that industry, poisoned by unscrupulous profit-seeking, should be professionalized and dedicated to public service. This doctrine, at least, could hardly be condemned by a thoughtful Christian. But might it not be put into effect under Capitalism? Precisely the same idea is gaining ground in America today with no Socialist connotations. Groups like the American Management Association and the Society for the Advancement of Management are teaching managers to think of their calling as a public-spirited profession, entailing duties toward consumers, workers, and the community at large, as well as stockholders. These groups, in short, are echoing Tawney. Yet most of the members are Republicans.

The place of Tawney the historian is secure. The place of Tawney the social analyst is also secure. If "progressive" management turns out to be a mere luxury by-product of boom conditions, Tawney the political partisan may yet be vindicated. But even he, with all his wisdom and good will, has not yet discovered a wholly satisfying translation of Christian belief into political action.

An Artist's Journey to the Center of Things

THE ECHOING GROVE. By Rosamond Lehmann. Harcourt, Brace. $3.95.

By ADRIENNE FOULKE

MISS Lehmann's new novel, her first since 1945, again proves what an exciting writer she is, not only because of what she writes and how, but on a third count as well: she has that infrequent and curious capacity which enables a writer to communicate to us at least a partial perception of what the creative act is. We finish her book with a sense of having been taken to the center of things.

Even if few of us are tempted to write novels, we are all more or less given to observation, and our observation may sometimes flower into a quickened insight or imaginativeness. It may happen as we stand or sit by the sea. We are drawn into a curiously intent, unfocused study of the water and all that the water will fetch up for our inspection. Unconsciously we mark out a definite pattern of movement: a shred of seaweed, a tiny claw of crab, a cloud of lifted sand slip forward, backward, shifting in response to the pressure of the water. And these are held briefly in a frame, arranged according to a tidal pattern created out of lunar immensities until they are deposited, lifeless, on the sand.

This quite common experience is relevant here because both the form and the substance of *The Echoing Grove* involve this kind of attentiveness. The particles of people's lives appear, disappear, and reappear in new formations, the whole resembling an undulating fluid mosaic constantly rearranged to present a face or form, feeling or thought.

Starting the story very near its end, Miss Lehmann brings two sisters together in tentative reconciliation after a fifteen-year estrangement. Their separation had grown out of their involvement with the same man, husband of one, lover of the other. This complicated relationship, from which no release through flight is possible, is not resolved even with the man's death. They continue to meet in the con-

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cern they share for the children whose father they both loved.

The book does not follow a conventional sequence. One moves back and forward in time; events are recorded long after one has learned some part of their consequences; the story may take the form of a recollection or chain of memories brought to the surface years later, while elsewhere the line is carried by direct narrative. From the point of view of structure, this novel is a remarkable achievement. In few others does form contribute so richly to substance. The many and intricate threads are woven into ever wider and denser patterns that become parts of an organic whole.

This whole is concerned with love, with the capacity to give and to accept it, and with how in one person it is frozen, or impaired, or, like fate, endured. If capacity for love is the problem, the solution, or rather the resolution, is the capacity to live, when it becomes necessary, alone.

Unlike many novelists who write histories of the heart, Miss Lehmann is not given to explanations, much less to analyses. There is no clinical examination of why it is that Rickie wavers for years between two sisters; no early traumas are adduced to explain Madeleine's cold, helpless greediness or Dinah's driven, emotional extravagance. Instead, Miss Lehmann has the perception and skill to make them account plausibly for themselves and for how they come, more or less evenly, to terms with themselves and, ultimately, to their individual treaties with each other.

The people in Miss Lehmann's world are governed not by social dicta but by the laws of emotional supply and demand. For her the external milieu matters very little. The role that the war plays in *The Echoing Grove* is significant—it is simply one of the conditions of life, like the lack of money or the loss of health. It is not this, but the given moment of any given day, the moment when two people may be together or must be apart, that is momentous.

One Woman

MARY MAGDALENE. By R. L. Bruckberger, O. P. Translated by H. L. Binsse. Pantheon. $3.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

FATHER Raymond-Leopold Bruckberger, O.P., is a prolific and a versatile writer. The story of his experiences as Chaplain General of the French Resistance, *One Sky to Share,* was not only exciting and noble, but was also marked by the deepest Christian compassion for the "collabo's"—the French who gave help and comfort to the enemy. His *The Golden Goat* won not only golden opinions, but a substantial award. Now his *Mary Magdalene* commands attention for at least two reasons even before it is read. It is published not with footnotes, or appended notes, but with a whole "companion volume," slim, it is true, but in small print and filled to the margins with annotations, arguments, proofs, references, sources and authority.

Father Bruckberger sees Mary

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of Magdala as the same person as Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus. That she was a "sinful woman in the city" and also well-born, rich, and a distinguished figure at the court of Herod, is not incompatible, he explains. He takes Father Lagrange to task for his insistence with Bossuet that there were three separate women, Mary Magdalene, the sinner; Mary of Bethany, the contemplative; and the woman with the seven devils.

Father Bruckberger's "detective story," his pursuit of his thesis through the four Gospels and Saint Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, is the most exciting part of his full and lovely reconstruction of the figure of Mary Magdalene. She is, he insists, comparable with Our Lady: the latter is the woman of the womb, Mary Magdalene is the woman of the tomb. She, like Saint Matthew, is the answer to the Pharisees, for he was the publican, she the sinner. She is the Hellenic world, as Saint John the Baptist was the Hebraic world, which Our Lord came to save. She is named first of all the holy women, was the first name listed after the twelve apostles; and she is, of course, the everlasting image of the contemplative life. In Christ's treatment of her and of Saint Matthew, in allowing these impure ones to *touch* Him, the Law with all its finicky prohibitions was exultantly overridden.

Father Bruckberger has a profound and sensitive knowledge of the mentality of the various members of the Jewish community at the time of Christ. Besides Mary Magdalene, two men are extraordinarily well handled: Saint John the Baptist and Judas. Father Bruckberger shows the role these two played in the drama of the Redemption, and shows, too, the scandal that Christ was, and brought, and the inevitability of the Passion.

As a tremendously exciting "whodunit" or, rather, "whowasit," as a moving appraisal of Mary Magdalene's role in the life of Christ, and as a learned and thoughtful historical essay, this is a threefold book, interesting and valid at all its three levels.

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The Long Struggle

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN. By James Baldwin. Knopf. $3.50.

By T. E. CASSIDY

THIS is a novel about Harlem's store-front churches, seen through the eyes of the people who go to one of them. These people have blood and flesh in their church, and in their past in the South, and it would seem that, therefore, their story would be of wonder, strength, tragedy, and sometimes beauty. The story is of all these things, partly. But it is not what the author hopes it will be, when he says of his intentions: "It is a fairly deliberate attempt to break out of what I always think of as the 'cage' of Negro writing. I wanted my people to be people first, Negroes almost incidentally."

He has not really accomplished that in this book, because there is always the absolute feeling of injustice toward a people, not as people, but as a race of people. The disasters that occur are those that occur only, or largely, because these are Negro people. Their feelings may be those shared in other circumstances by others, but these, here, are clearly marked 'Negro.' Yet the mark of the spirit is here, that which can be seen in any experience of men who have a sense of sin and a sense of repentance.

This is the mark that is upon the Grimes family, in one way or another. The tale of John's childhood and growth is the tale of his awakening to his role in the life of the Harlem church where his father is head deacon. The "Temple of the Fire Baptized" is the scene of a revival meeting. During the course of the meeting, the author goes back over the lives of the Grimes family—their individual journeys from the South to the North. The first part ("The Seventh Day") sets the scene and gathers all the family into present focus. In part two, the lives of Florence, Gabriel, and Elizabeth—sister, brother, and wife—are recorded in relation to each other and to the children, John and Roy. Each of these is a story that leads to a prayer for salvation and hope for the children, especially for John who is marked for the elect. The last part is "The Threshing Floor," the wrestling arena where John meets the Lord and the sword-test of the soul.

Temptation stalks everyone, and wins and loses alternately. Gabriel, for example, "hated the evil that lived in his body, and he feared it, as he feared and hated the lions of lust and longing that prowled the defenseless city of his mind." Elizabeth had been told by her father to "weep, when she wept, alone; never to let the world see, never to ask for mercy; if one had to die, to go ahead and die, but never to let oneself be beaten." And Florence, as she finds her way to the Lord, was "as though she had been hurled outward into time, where no boundaries were, for the voice was the voice of her mother, but the hands were the hands of death."

There are many strong and powerful scenes in this work. Mr. Baldwin has his eye clearly on the full values that his sincere characters possess, though these values often are tossed aside and trampled. His people have an enormous capacity for sin, but their capacity for suffering and repentance is even greater. I think that is the outstanding quality of this work, a sometimes majestic sense of the failings of men and their ability to work through their misery to some kind of peaceful salvation. Certainly, the spark of the holy fire flashes even through their numerous external misfortunes.

Moral Concern

THE AMERICAN ROAD TO WORLD PEACE. By Sir Alfred Zimmern. Dutton. $4.

By M. A. FITZSIMONS

IN America's recent sultry and often unilluminating "great debates," the basic problem of our foreign policy has been revealed but not resolved. The problem is to find a just balance between the imperative demands of survival (power politics), and the obligations to weakened or backward societies imposed upon a wealthy nation by neighborliness, charity, and farseeing prudence. The problem is further complicated by a kind of dialectical confusion caused by American antipathy to power politics, a pervasive and deep reluctance to use the tone of command instead of exhortation, and American bewilderment and misgivings before the magnitude of the dimly apprehended moral obligations.

Indeed, the guidance available on moral questions in foreign policy has been so vague, contradictory and poor, and irresponsible moralizing can have such baneful effects that such prominent students and practitioners of international affairs as Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan have attacked and rejected the legalist and moralist approach to foreign policy. In its place they would substitute an ill-defined "national interest," a barely secular version of Foreign Secretary George Canning's slogan: "Each nation for itself, and God for us all." They are good examples of those who do not solve problems but deny their existence.

Sir Alfred Zimmern, author of a memorably enlightening volume, *The Greek Commonwealth*, pioneer of UNESCO and a sharp and helpful critic of its work, and a lifelong student of international affairs, has written a valuable and penetrating tract which confronts the American problem squarely. The American road to world peace, he believes, requires the expansion of the community of the free, "a world in which the relations of men to one another are neighborly and helpful rather than unkind, suspicious, and either actually or potentially hostile."

Such are the communities of the United States and Switzerland. Communities of this sort face the world with the instincts of friendship and neighborliness, and without the sullen panoply of might. This is the basic point: the United States can be true to itself only by extending in the international realm the community of free citizens. This, the author insists in his stimulating and partisan account of the Wilsonian vision of the League of Nations, is the road we must travel.

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This community of the free may grow in the United Nations, although on this matter the author is cheered only by the growing power of the General Assembly. If, however, there is to be a "constitutional domination of the world" or the rule of law, there must be an executive. But the Security Council cannot be effective, for apart from Soviet ill-will, the Security Council's organization maintains the mistrust of state-for-state politics by making its members representatives of individual states.

The author, by carefully distinguishing between military and political problems, is not tempted to despair of politics. Reason, realism and moral concern characterize this tract, which expresses a strikingly sturdy faith in the survival of the free world and the political capacity of the United States. Sir Alfred, however, has no illusions about the Soviet Union and manifestly shares the general Swiss regret that the Communist regime was ever accepted in the League of Nations.

His basic insight is important, so important that it is deplorable that he did not decide to write a more systematic and closely-argued book.

REVIEWERS

Adrienne Foulke is a New York critic who has recently returned from the Orient.

T. E. Cassidy teaches in the faculty of English at Fordham University.

M. A. Fitzsimons is a member of the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame.

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